

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED MAY 13 1980  
DATE ENTERED JUN 16 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC  
Gilbert Elementary School  
AND/OR COMMON  
The Alamo

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
Southwest corner of Elliot & Gilbert Roads  
CITY, TOWN  
Gilbert  
STATE  
Arizona  
VICINITY OF  
1  
CODE  
04  
COUNTY  
Maricopa  
CODE  
013  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: storage

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Gilbert Unified School District No. 41  
STREET & NUMBER  
140 S. Gilbert Rd., P.O. Drawer #1  
CITY, TOWN  
Gilbert  
STATE  
Arizona  
VICINITY OF  
85234

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Maricopa County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
111 South Third Avenue  
CITY, TOWN  
Phoenix  
STATE  
Arizona

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN  
STATE  
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR  
 DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Gilbert Elementary School, located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Gilbert and Elliot Roads in Gilbert, Arizona, consists of a central block with two attached wings. The central block was built in 1913 of stuccoed ceramic block. Rectangular in plan, the building measures 121 feet across the front, by 61 feet on each side. Each wing is joined to the main section by a covered arcade and is also rectangular in plan. The north wing was built in 1917-1918 and measures 83 feet by 36 feet; the south wing was built in 1925 and measures 121 feet by 61 feet.

Across the front of the main facade is a buttressed portico on a raised base, reached by steps on three sides. It features five semicircular arches: three across the front and one at either end. The front wall of the portico rises to form a curvilinear parapet, typical of the Mission Revival style. The parapet is pierced by three semicircular arched openings. The central opening, which is larger than the two flanking openings, houses an original cast brass bell. Exterior walls are stuccoed and have been painted in a sandy beige tone.

Entry to the main block is by three sets of double doors; one in the front portico and two on each side leading into the covered arcades connecting each wing to the central block. All of the original 24-over-24 light double hung exterior windows have been replaced with sliding aluminum frame windows. Several other exterior windows have been covered over and stuccoed, reducing both natural lighting and cross ventilation in the classrooms. The windows, which are arranged primarily in either groups of two or four, were originally all shaded with terra cotta tile-roofed hoods supported by wooden brackets. Currently, only the main section and north wing have these hoods intact.

The flat roof is covered with built-up composition material. The parapet of the exterior walls have 6" x 6" decorative wood pieces simulating protruding vigas, which are the roof rafters found in traditional Southwestern architecture. The foundation is of poured concrete.

The main block contains four classrooms, an auditorium, a library and a principal's office. A small basement located under the auditorium now serves as storage space. At one time, it housed a boiler for steam heating and has served as classroom space when needed. The north wing consists of four classrooms, two on the ground floor and two in the basement. The south wing contains two classrooms and the school's restroom facilities.

The interior of the main section features most of the original materials, such as wainscoting, doors and the associated hardware. Each classroom has one interior doorway. The classrooms have interior transom windows opening onto the corridors for cross ventilation. The floors are made of 1 inch-by-2 inch oak tongue-and-groove boards over wood subflooring supported by heavy timbers. The north wing displays similar wood flooring. The south wing, however, has concrete flooring. Both wings also feature most of their original interior features. The only major alteration to the interiors of each section has been the addition of fluorescent lighting fixtures.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1913, 1917-1918, 1925 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Lescher and Kibbey Architects

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Gilbert Elementary School was built at a time when the school building of many small communities throughout America was often the largest and most conspicuous building in the community. Certainly for Gilbert, Arizona, this building was the most prominent for many years. The building was designed in the Mission Revival Style by Architects Lescher and Kibbey of Phoenix in a fashion typical of many other institutional buildings designed by them. This architectural firm was probably responsible for more public building in Arizona than any other firm. More importantly, the Gilbert Elementary School is the only remaining public building surviving from the town's beginnings. The building has served as a focal point for non-educational activities such as community events and political rallies. In addition, two major religious institutions got their start in the community by holding services there. Certainly, the building has served the elementary educational needs of the community throughout most of Gilbert's existence.

On April 24, 1913, a bond was authorized by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors in the sum of \$15,000 for the purpose of raising money for constructing, furnishing and landscaping a new school because the old two-room adobe school had become too small. On June 6, 1913, the Wilbur Realty Company of Gilbert donated five acres of land at the southwest corner of the intersection of Elliot and Gilbert Roads to the Highland School District No. 41.

The architectural firm of Lescher and Kibbey, of Phoenix, drew the plans for the building, which consisted of four classrooms, a library, a principal's office and an assembly room. The Mission Revival style building is vaguely reminiscent of the Alamo in Texas, and the building developed the local nickname "The Alamo". The restrooms were built with block taken from the old two-room Highland School on Cooper Road. The first classes were held in the new school in September, 1913.

This building was the only place in the small community which could be used for both education needs and social functions. Ethel Hoffman Lacy, daughter of one of the members of the school board at the time the school was built, says, "That was the only place to go--there wasn't any other building around that you could have entertainment in." The Woman's Club presented plays there, the townspeople had oyster suppers, square dancing and potluck suppers. When political rallies were held, or politicians came to speak, the school building was used as the meeting place.

The Methodist Church in Gilbert was organized and conducted services on the porch of the Gilbert Elementary School with eleven members in August, 1915. They met there for three years until October, 1918, when they moved with a membership of twenty-four into their own building. Also, in 1915, the Mormons felt the need to

(See continuation sheet)



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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

have their own Gilbert Ward, so they began holding their meetings in the school building. By February, 1918, the members had built their own building across Elliot Road from the school.

Several new elementary schools have been built to serve the community, and the old school building ceased being used for classrooms in the fall of 1978. The Gilbert Elementary School is now being used by the school district for the storage of school supplies. The school play yard is still used, however, by children attending the new Gilbert Elementary School adjacent on the south.

Because of the building's age, beauty, style of architecture, location in proximity to newer school locations and its uniqueness in being the only institutional building left from the beginnings of the Town of Gilbert, the Gilbert Historical Society feels it is worth preserving, and plans to set up a museum in it and perform needed rehabilitation work.